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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PINS](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: MAYSANI SHEIKHS: EXPECT MORE ATTACKS

Classified By: PRT Maysan Leader Dan Foote for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S/REL MCFI) Summary: In an August 19 meeting with U.S. officials, Maysani sheikhs Ali Hasan Sajar Al-Fartusi and Saha, Jabar Suhail Al-Buzaid warned of a "second phase" in local reactions to the U.S. presence in the governorate, predicting that released detainees and militants returning from Iran would lead to more attacks on Coalition Forces (CF). They disavowed any knowledge of the rocket attack earlier in the day on the U.S. military base and warned that Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) infiltration of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), particularly the Iraqi Police (IP), remained a problem. The sheikhs complained about the dominance of Sadrists in the provincial government and charged that local authorities steer government contracts to companies associated with JAM. They talked in great detail about the organization of the Maysan Tribal Support Council but were nebulous regarding the council's actual work, and insisted that the council was "independent from any party," although all of its members supported Prime Minister Maliki. End summary.

Rocket Attack at FOB Garry Owen, More to Come?

¶2. (S/REL MCFI) The sheikhs expressed their condolences over the August 19 attack on Forward Operating Base Garry Owen and characterized the incident as part of a "second phase." (Note: An early morning rocket attack on the FOB, the first of its kind in Maysan, resulted in several American casualties. End Note.) They explained that while Maysanis did not initially react to the American presence, more attacks would occur as militants returned from Iran and suspects arrested in earlier ISF operations were released. Although the rockets were launched from land supposedly under their control, the sheikhs disavowed any knowledge of the attack, saying, "we are not intelligence officers or security experts, rather we just guide people." Instead, they repeatedly emphasized the necessity of a "strong and thorough" investigation into the attack and warned that the Iraqi Army, and especially the IP, were infiltrated by Jaysh al-Mahdi. They also speculated that IP Provincial Chief Sa,ad was himself linked to JAM. The sheikhs criticized local judges as being corrupt and unwilling to issue warrants and criticized weapons buy-back programs for offering sums below market value.

JAM Strong in Provincial Government

¶3. (S/REL MCFI) Asked about the provincial government, the sheikhs said "there are some good people, loyal to the country...and then there are the Sadrists." They complained that members of the Sadrist-affiliated Hussein Ideology Front (HIF) used their voting majority in the Provincial Council (PC) to hamper security investigations and steer contracts toward JAM-affiliated contractors. They added that, contrary to PC by-laws, several HIF PC members currently living in Iran continued to receive their salaries despite their absence from the PC sessions. As examples they named Ali Hussein Al-Dhali and Ali Diwa, Lazar. The sheikhs reacted

with obvious dismay when the PRT received a cellular call from Zaid al-Hoshi, a close aide of the Maysani governor, during the meeting. They called Zaid "a thief and a liar...he is 100 percent JAM," adding that Zaid controls a network of companies that turn over ten percent of their income to JAM. The sheikhs were reluctant to offer any prediction on the Maysani provincial elections. "In the past," said Sheikh Ali Hasan, "the marja,iyya and Sistani told people how to vote. But I visited Sistani and he said he will not intervene in the election." They said the Sadrists would participate in the elections through the National Reform Trend as well as various fronts. "They all use names like the independents, and the cultured," said Ali Sarhan.

Maysan Tribal Support Council: Affiliated with the Prime Minister?

14. (S/REL MCFI) The sheikhs described the Tribal Support Council, or Maysan Awakening Council, as being composed of 340 members; 20 from each of Maysan's 17 districts. A supervisory committee oversees the overall work of the council as well as its four functional components: the security, services, reconciliation, and administration and finance committees. Mohammed Sa,adoon of the Sudan tribe is the chair of the supervisory committee and Ali Hasan Sajar and Abdul Wa,ef are his two deputies. The sheikhs were vague about the actual work of the council and only identified specific responsibilities for the security committee (charged with coordinating with ISF officials),

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although they admitted that "this hasn,t happened yet." The sheikhs emphasized that the council was "independent from any party," but added that all of its members supported Prime Minister Maliki "because he is a nationalist." The sheikhs closed the meeting with requests for PRT support for various projects, including: marshland restoration efforts; contracts to companies owned by the sheikhs; an examination by a cardiologist (Sheikh Ali Hasan); and treatment for a skin pigmentation disorder (Sheikh Saha, Jabar).

Comment

15. (S/REL MCFI) As common in meetings with tribal leaders throughout the south, the sheikhs were eager for U.S. financial assistance and full of criticism for local government. Also unsurprising was their lack of specific project ideas (beyond contracts to their companies) and their denial of any responsibility for or knowledge of attacks on Coalition Forces. The most beneficial aspect of the meeting may have been the unexpected attendance of PC member Ali Sarhan, who expressed eagerness to work with U.S. officials and claimed to possess information on militant groups within the province. The PRT hopes to meet with Ali Sarhan in the near future as part of an effort to broaden its engagement with the Provincial Council. End comment.
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